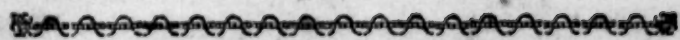


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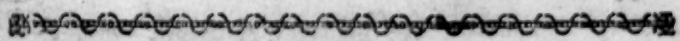


Mr. BENTLEY's

A D D R E S S

TO THE

ESSEX LODGE.



AN  
ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE  
ESSAY LODGE

BY THE  
Festival of St. John the Evangelist

INDUCTION BY THE OFFICERS

OF THE LODGE  
BY THE OFFICERS  
OF THE LODGE

BY WILLIAM RENTLEY

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST  
IS A MOST INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE  
AND A MOST INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE  
AND A MOST INTERESTING AND INSTRUCTIVE

THE FESTIVAL OF ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST  
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AN  
ADDRESS,  
DELIVERED IN THE  
ESSEX LODGE,  
UPON THE  
Festival of St. John the Evangelist,  
AT THE  
INDUCTION OF THE OFFICERS  
By BROTHER JOSEPH HILLER, PAST MASTER, AND  
BROTHER BENJAMIN HODGES, MASTER ELECT.

DECEMBER 27, 1798.

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By WILLIAM BENTLEY,  
MEMBER OF ESSEX LODGE.

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"To receive guests with honour, is the sacrament of men."

INSTITUTES OF MENU.

"If, in the instructions we give to others, we inquire not into the experience and institutions of past ages, how can we profit mankind?"

CHOU-KING.

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PRINTED AT SALEM, BY JOSHUA CUSHING,  
1799.

*In Essex Lodge, 27th December, 5798.*

VOTED,

*That the Rt. Worshipful BENJAMIN HODGES, Master, ABEL LAWRENCE and EDWARD LANG, Brethren, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. Brother WILLIAM BENTLEY, with the thanks of this Lodge, for his Address delivered in the Lodge this day, and to request a copy for the press.*

Attest.

*EDWARD LANG, Sec'ry.*





## MASONIC ADDRESS.

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RIGHT WORSHIPFUL MASTER, WARDENS,  
AND BRETHREN, OF ESSEX LODGE,

**P**ERMIT me to salute you upon our joyful anniversary. Since our last commemoration, Masonry has been placed before the world in unusual, but important, attitudes. In an age of revolutions, when jealousy has all its power, and can violate what creates its fears, we could not expect that any association, much less a secret one, should be heard of without anxious apprehensions. Jealousy, led by faction, will cut the knot it cannot untie. When it is the guardian of the public rights, it will claim to hold what may fall into the hands of a public enemy. It  
always

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always may be prompted by envy, which always hates success. And thus the best institutions have been sacrificed, in all ages, to the jealousy and the folly of mankind.

MASONRY could not be forgotten. Allied to the whole social character, it would be seen by every eye, which inquired for man. It would appear in every attitude in which man could be placed, ready to give him the counsels of its wisdom. It is not then to be wondered, that it has been the subject of angry contention, and of vile misrepresentation. Beauty, while it transports innocence into love, fills the envious with misery and death.

BUT this has been remarkable in the present state of Masonry in this country. At the time, in which it would willingly have disappeared from the jealous eyes of the world, every cause has contributed to  
force

force it upon the public notice. Success gave an anxious solicitude to possess its secrets. They who have not hated it from prejudice, have therefore become friends from their curiosity. Its rapid progress has therefore rather asked a check from its friends, than given any just fears from its pretended enemies. The suspicions are, of themselves, a powerful cause of the prosperity. In vain then do they impute to the worst causes, what is the simple and natural effect of their own apprehensions. The Brethren are tempted to view themselves in a new light, from their great acquisition of strength. They are tempted to defy those, whom it will always be dangerous to despise. In such a novel situation, Masons have condescended to vindicate themselves before the public, a tribunal at which they ought never to have been challenged. They have plead their innocence, and even promised to obey the laws. Their duty, and their love,  
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has now become their public oath. By these measures, they make slow advances to the public favour. The world want not our promise; they wish to hold us in their power. They know not the means we possess to attain the worst ends, or the best. It is then upon our public character we must at last depend; and upon this, in some circumstances, the world would depend, with greater confidence, if we should say nothing in our own vindication.

BUT what is wise and safe in some, is not in all circumstances. To express a gratitude to our administration, in common with our fellow citizens, was our right; and the form, in which we could most innocently express our allegiance to the government, was in the public addresses, which public favour had patronised. The replies we have received are before the public; and how much they have contributed to the reputation of the Craft, must  
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Be determined by those who read them: The address to General WASHINGTON, as a Brother, must have the best effect, because he gives us his own testimony, that he is a stranger to any ill designs of our institution. But the replies of President ADAMS, such as he was indeed obliged to offer, have only left us where he found us, if in so happy condition. His answers are candid, but he could know nothing. His answer to Massachusetts Grand Lodge insinuates his hopes. To Maryland, he seems to express even his fears. To Vermont, he says, he believes the institution has been useful. But while he expresses a confidence in the American Lodges, he consents to hold our Lodges capable of corruption. His words are, Masons "will best know whether any dangers are possible in other countries, as well as this." The present state of France has afforded the plea for these insinuations, especially at a time, when that nation is held up to the

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world



world in the darkest colours. We have no concern with the true national character ; but there is a very important distinction to be made, in our favour, between the state of France before the revolution, and after that event. We express the greatest affection to our own government unequivocally, now we are its lawful subjects : as Masons and citizens we ought to do it, and we must do it. Why then should not the French do the same to their own ? If there were any error, it must be in commencing the revolution in the Lodges ; and that was never proved upon the Lodges in France, more than upon the Lodges in America, and never will be proved. They will never take the praise, or the blame. It is from the neglect of this distinction, that our common cause is suffering. This is the proof we ought to demand. It is of the greatest consequence to deny the last fact, but to the highest honour of Masonry to learn that the Masons

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in France had early the spirit of their own government, whatever it might be. It would be a sad complaint from the people, as well as from the king, that they were opposed by the Lodges. It is evident they were not enemies to the king, or to the people.

THIS truth makes a well informed Brother to view with concern, that so many are thoughtless of the design of our enemies. If they can only persuade the people of our guilt in any place, their great point is gained. It is a common cause, and it must suffer. It is for this reason that a late Scotch professor has thrown out his charges in an artful confusion, so as to prove nothing, and yet imply every thing; to engage the public suspicions, and yet not to suffer every man to see that his design was ungenerous, and political, and his work destitute of truth. If, in any country, Masons are detected, their common

mon cause is desperate. And it is to this presumption the President, in all his answers, justly directs our attention. A reply then to the Scotchman, is our salvation. It was so perceived in the English Lodges, as their numerous printed vindications will discover. And the exceptions made in favour of England and America, are only so many subterfuges to make us insensible of our common danger; to substantiate a general charge in the public mind, and then to stab the vitals of our institution; when we, by a careless consent with the Scotch professor, had already signed our own death warrant.

OF another artifice, the Brethren have not been sufficiently aware. The simple Lodges, who are the soul of Masonry, are to be involved in all the consequences of the higher orders, when these are not under the jurisdiction of the simple Lodges, and cannot possibly originate in them, or  
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be known by them. Legislators are such; only when together. We should confine our defence to the simple Lodges. The example which has given the public alarm is directly to our purpose. Where begins the error in the French Lodges? It was imported from the interior parts of Germany, from a German Lodge. What was that German Lodge? No Lodge at all. For when the founder of it was questioned, he has proved, says even his enemy, demonstratively, that he was not a Mason when what is called his Lodge was instituted. It was no more a Mason's Lodge, than our Marine Society, or the *Phi Beta Kappa* of the lads of Cambridge. The founder says, "I knew nothing of Masonry, till years afterwards." We should take the precise object, and make our defence upon the real institution, and its eternal principles.

PERMIT me then briefly to point out to you the important end of our institution,  
considered



considered as distinct from the national religion. Let me shew you the real expediency of secret societies, from the nature of man ; and then let me expose to you briefly the want of internal evidence in the late attempts to fasten the charge of a conspiracy upon our order. We may then pass to the duties of this joyful anniversary.

On the present occasion we should not have troubled ourselves with so needless a comparison, as of the different ends of Masonry and Religion, and yet of the advantages of both, had not a popular objection been formed from it. We might as soon have thought that there was no need of an account book, because there was a bible ; or no need of laws, the Congress, or President, because there was a religion, a Saviour, and a God. But when trifles can seize the public attention, they can become important things in their consequences.

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The answers must then be adapted to those, upon whom prejudice can have any power. And did Paul reap no benefit from Roman liberty, after he became a christian? Can a man have no relief, but from a christian? If a man can prove himself a professed christian, need he no other claim upon charity? A Christian is of a sect, and of a separate communion, every where, and from necessity. It is one family which he chooses, prefers, and enters. It is a union with opinions, not with the world. Paul tells the christians, that they are not of the world; but not that therefore they ought to go out of the world. There are friendships and social duties with all mankind. Whatsoever things are lovely, and of good reputation; wherever there is virtue and praise, christians are to practise such things. We have our intercourse of business, and our morality of life, as well as of religion. We engage in the commerce of the world, and are obliged to see man, when we are to forget

forget the prejudices of his heart and of his head. There is then no better reason that the same man should not be a Mason, and a Christian, than that he should not be clothed, because he is fed; or that he should not have an uncle, a benefactor, or a friend, while his father was living. The object of Christianity and Masonry never can be the same, because christianity has, as its immediate object, the advancement of personal virtue always above the state of society in common life. It proposes its highest rewards in a future existence, and directs all its associations to this end. Our institution provides immediately for the friendship of life and manners through the the world, when we overlook all the opinions in it, and regard only safety, confidence, and our social interest.

Few men, who think, and observe the different ends of life, will be content to dwell upon this objection. Another more  
specious

specious is ready. What need can there be for any secret societies? Why may not every thing be open, common, and universal? This is language adapted to the unthinking. It seems social, generous, and even great, while it is disorganizing. It is what is to be wished, but cannot readily be obtained. But let us consult the nature of man. What is the social spring? Is it the knowledge or love of all men? Does man begin to act from himself, or from the whole? Is not the social spring, preservation, which he learns to employ? He then first looks to things near to him. As he rises and surveys, he looks further on. But still the prospect is bounded, and distant objects are not distinct. Must he delay till all men agree? He might as well stop the tide of life, call the infant into man, and convert man into an angel. What would be his fate, if he regarded not any, till he could enjoy all? What world is provided to render him happy? The

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principle

principle of private associations is then universal, and always employed. Tradition betrays it among savages. It is the privilege of every profession, and of every art. The mysteries of Greece are in name immortal. They survived, at Rome, the glory of Greece. They were indulged in the forms of the primitive Church. They belong to the usual confidence of life. They assist in the nature of friendship, and form the exclusive right which makes of twain one flesh. The disciples of Jesus dared not to blame the lovely confidence, which the character of John inspired. It is then a privilege by birth right from heaven. It is the choice boon of friendship. It is the right of common nature through the globe, and possessed by common law, and the consent of nations, in some degree, through the world. It can be abridged only in the loss of rational liberty, and can be surrendered to no government, but as the last price to be paid for a miserable existence.



existence. This ark of God has been touched, when the salutary arts by which man conveys himself to man have been denied ; when reading, writing and speaking have been prohibited ; when travelling abroad has been prevented ; when the visits of foreigners have been restrained ; when a change of condition has been refused to industry, to genius and to virtue. All these things have been the subjects of many laws, and have been taken from mankind, upon the plausible pretences of public over private right. But laws should have justice ; and the greatest good of public and private character is that justice. We stand then in the liberty in which God has made us free.

BUT no right can licence any abuse. To prove this abuse to be real, is the last effort of political stratagem. It is that by which the most innocent orders have been punished with the guilty. The superstitious



tious are taught, that Masonry is against Christianity; the ignorant, that we are unsocial and narrow in our foundation. But the politician affirms, that our right cannot be safe to civil society, and therefore cannot exist as a civil privilege. The abuse in fact is necessary to support the attempt to refuse the privilege. It has been pretended. But we ought to be guarded against a sword, which, when drawn, is against Masonry throughout the world. We are first to be made hateful, and then we shall be abandoned to oppression.

BUT let us examine the internal evidence of the books which contain the proofs of the most dangerous abuse; a conspiracy against society, law, and even of man against himself. Where was it discovered? In Germany. Where did it act? In France. France then was revolutionized by Germany. This is news, certainly. Who began it? A man who says,  
what

what he did, he did when he knew nothing of Masonry; and his enemies acknowledged it. Why then should Masonry suffer for it? But how did the French get it? They found it. When? After the Germans dropped it. So futile is the whole history. But who believes it? Not one good writer among the forty millions of Germans, who knew the whole pretence. What say men abroad? That it is a pernicious work, without proper documents, and just evidence. Who published it? Men, who have taken up an evil report, who do not agree together. But who were the principal agents in the pretended mischief? Of the chief, his many works speak genius, love of order, and love of truth; and he is as quiet a man, and as useful, as society has in it. The most active, has published works before and since this accusation, which prove him a zealous Christian. Of the last, a man of the greatest address, and the greatest traveller, and to whom is charged

charged the most mischief, it is affirmed by himself, that he knew nothing of Illuminatism but from the public prints. What kind of conspiracy is this? But how do the accusers agree? They were not on the ground, and do not agree in their own documents, and misrepresentations have been proved upon them all. But how have these accused men been punished? The leading characters publish their works with applause, and have the public confidence. Were their designs ever made known? Yes, and patronised by the Emperour. Their meetings were at first encouraged, and the Protestants had the benefit; and the salutary measures were reported in America. Whence then arose the trouble? The government changed its measures; till at length, from the freest political inquiries, the Emperour proceeded to the extreme of prohibiting the printing of any such books, of a size that a poor man could purchase. Were there any charges of

of rebellion, or of public discontents, against these men? No; of speculative opinions only. Who then were these men of speculation? Men of letters, living in and maintained by the state; not disaffected men. What were their speculations? Any thing which slander and suspicion could suggest. Was there no pretended evidence? Yes, from writings never signed, and absolutely denied. Their worst discourses were confessedly filled with the purest morality; and all the papers of their proceedings were offered to government, and they offered to stand trial upon them. Who were the men? Chiefly clergymen; four fifths of them were either of this order, or professors in universities; and they had no livings from the people, but from the government. What end had they? The accusation proposes no end but wanton mischief, in which they had every thing to lose, and nothing to gain. Did the clergy of France or America desert  
their



their establishments in this manner? It is well known that no men in public livings ever did. How did they conduct in their associations? Professed good principles, and were said to be open in their opinions, even when charged with conspiracy. The dissolution of the order was from a controversy with particular members. The charges were brought, not against all, but a few of supposed higher grades. The accusers before the public were convicted of ignorance, and as not belonging to orders they accused. And it is confessed, that ejected religious orders were busy with their resentments in all the transactions. The characters are so grouped, that every man may see the absurdity of their pretended concurrence. Such is ingenuously the substance of the whole evidence to prove the abuse of Masonry, and then to degrade the whole institution. It has but one apology, and that arises from the distress of the world. Alarm was every where.



where. Phantoms and spectres became every where real beings. Men suspected every thing. And this was the opportunity to accomplish the purposes of a false zeal, of private resentment, or of the most daring ambition of power. But it is too late. Free Masons have long been in the quiet possession of their ancient privileges. These, from long indulgence, they consider as their just liberty ; and, as they have never forfeited it, they will continue to hold and to enjoy it.

THE best purposes of life in civil society have led men to such associations. The mysteries of Greece gave freedom to the spirit even of a Philosopher in the days of ancient liberty. Rome consented to accept the gift. Roman citizenship gave a rich value to association in civil society ; and the religious orders supported the cause of the church, by extending the same idea to the christian religion. The Jesuits made  
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the bold experiment of its power, with unexampled success, and might have continued in glory, had they not been perverted by private ambition. Masons have not made a bolder, but safer experiment. Without regard to forms of government, or private opinions, it embraces every where what is happy for man, upon the laws of his own constitution. It puts that as a law, which is found convenient. It takes up so much of the character of man, as agrees with his first duties. It was thus the old Abbe ST. PIERRE gave the elements of his project for a perpetual peace. It is thus KANT, in the same design, proposes to restore confidence among mankind. Our principles are the sober theory of human nature, which must bless the world.

HAPPY then must we be in our ancient institution. Its object is to find an home, wherever man is to be found. It bids every brother to take the lessons of his duty  
from

from his heart. There is no obligation of gratitude, but go, and do likewise. It is man it loves, and with God it unites to bless him in every clime.

ON the present anniversary, the ESSEX LODGE is not without the most pleasing recollections. The same faithful Master, who first blessed our Lodge, and whose name is in all the Lodges, is yet with us, and contributed largely to adorn the new building we have raised. How indefatigable, persevering, and benevolent, have been his labours! Who, that tastes the joy of this day, and is grateful for its preservation, does not love the name of HILLER? \* Let him rest from his labours, in the glory of the temple he has raised. The happiness of the Lodge was sincere, when our late Master, † in whom united our utmost confidence and affection, accepted the emblems

\* JOSEPH HILLER, Esq. Collector of the Port of Salem.

† EDWARD PULLING, Esq. Attorney at Law.

blems of his equal government, and generous prudence. We have preserved the harmony, which he gave to the Brethren. Often shall we lament the sad indisposition, which obliges his absence, and which gives a two-fold bereavement to his spirits, when he thinks of the separation. Infirmary may impair our own memory, but we may live in the memory of our friends. Time has never made the bold design of a palace rude, like the native quarry, by effacing the grandeur from the venerable ruins. But blessed be the power of good example. Our succession is happy, though so often renewed. There are ready master builders for our noblest designs. The unanimity in our election of the present Master, † is an honourable testimony to him, and a sure proof that he has the richest materials in his hands. There is harmony in the work, industry in the task, and zeal for perfection. It is no common honour to unite in ourselves the affections of the faithful. And the

† Captain BENJAMIN HODGES.



the confidence of Brethren exacts the highest sense of duty. Happy are we in the belief, that our own obligations will increase, and that we shall owe every duty to our cause, as the just and highest reward of a generous benefactor, who is consecrated to our service. Our pillars stand strong. The same eye continues to watch over our treasure, and the same hand engraves our deeds on the tables we have prepared. We descend to the world by easy steps, and the door is shut in peace.

THE character of human life usually requires, while we recount the greatest blessings, that we should with friendly circumspection admonish of growing evils; for, as the weeds, they will grow in the garden of God. While jealousy stands ready to mark the least errors, and while sad experience may prove, that errors may every where exist; while we have artful men around us to misrepresent, and weak men to misconceive, this is the time when such admonitions

tions are just. But it is a lovely reflection on the present occasion, that they were never less necessary ; and it is the purest ambition of my soul, for the honour of the Craft, that we may remain with the same glory which now distinguishes us. Humanity has not higher hopes. The exalted charity ; the undissembled consent of soul ; the ready service in our common interest ; the just reputation of the members ; and the real virtues of their lives, are subjects of the purest congratulations. Their industry, success, and hopes, inspire the highest praise.

LET us venerate our ancient institution. Our consent in this simple form, unites us with all nations. Our hearts are here prepared for the noblest duties. We can assist the world in its best hopes, and certainly concur in the best ends of civil society. Association we learn from God.

LET US RISE,

## THE PRAYER.

**G**REAT Light of Life! whom all beings love, because they enjoy thee! In every thing thou art, and in us. We live in the light of thy countenance. We exist by thy strength, and are harmony in thee. Bless us, even us, O our Father! Give us one soul. Influence us by the same zeal. Purify us by the same light of truth. In the joy of this day we praise thee. Joy makes our praise sublime! Bless the Brethren, one in name and in heart. Bless the Elect, who stand near thee to represent thy power. May they proclaim also thy wisdom and love. May the Master be glorious and firm, like the arch of heaven, in which all the revolutions of nature are performed. May the Wardens be sure as the poles of our globe. May the Deacons be constant as the hours. May the Treasurer keep what time cannot corrupt; and the Secretary record what eternal truth shall approve. May the Stewards be faithful, as the earth in its rich increase; and the Tyler be like the eye of a kind providence, which watches unseen. All in thee, and each in all. To the great Light of Life be glory.